

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) was pleased today when the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) signed a project construction grant agreement with Lane Transit District (LTD) to provide a total of \$32.5 million in federal funding for the 14-station, 7.8-mile Pioneer Parkway extension of the “Emerald Express” (EmX) bus rapid transit system. The grant is from the FTA’s Small Starts program, which DeFazio helped author in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005. The LTD Pioneer Parkway bus rapid transit (BRT) extension is the first project to complete a grant agreement in the Small Starts program.

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“LTD’s current bus rapid transit service in Eugene-Springfield has been a huge success and surpassed 20-year ridership projections in the first year,” DeFazio said. “The grant agreement being signed today with the Federal Transit Administration to extend EmX along the Pioneer Parkway will provide clean, efficient transit for thousands more people every day and will build on the success of the Franklin corridor BRT service.”

When completed, the \$41.3-million extension will link the existing Franklin corridor BRT route, which opened in January 2007, to major employers along the Pioneer Parkway including Symantec, Royal Caribbean, PeaceHealth, and the North Gateway Mall. By 2010, it is expected that 15,500 people will be employed within one-half mile of the BRT route. Upon completion of the Pioneer Parkway extension, the EmX is expected to carry approximately 3,700 passengers daily.

DeFazio is Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, which has jurisdiction over Federal transit policy. Next year he will be a key architect of legislation to reauthorize the nation’s surface transportation programs.